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November 29, 2011

The Honorable Marco Rubio
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Rubio:

I am writing to express my surprise and outrage that you are not wholeheartedly supporting the appointment of a very capable Puerto Rican woman, Mari Carmen Aponte, to serve as U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador.

Unless you act quickly, her appointment as Ambassador will expire and she will be recalled, which would be a blow to U.S.-Salvadoran relations and would also be an important signal of your lack of support for the Puerto Rican community -- in Puerto Rico, in Florida and across the United States. I urge you not to turn your back on her.

I have heard you tell your parents' story of coming to this country from Cuba to seek economic opportunity in 1956, just as my family came from Puerto Rico for economic opportunity in 1953. Each family came with great faith in this country and the hope that their children would benefit from their journey. Indeed, you and I have each achieved many of our parents' greatest hopes and aspirations.

Therefore, it surprises me that you would stand in the way of Ambassador Aponte. She is providing an essential public service to the United States. She will continue to serve honorably if you and your Republican colleagues do not block her nomination. I believe she serves as inspiration to Latinos, Puerto Ricans and women who aspire to be leaders and public servants.

Florida is home to more than one million Puerto Ricans who count on you to represent their interests and not just the narrow interests of your party. If you fail to support Ambassador Aponte, you are telling Puerto Ricans -- and all Latinos -- that political expediency is more important to you than qualifications and experience. It has been reported that you are holding your support for Ambassador Aponte hostage to concessions you seek on Cuba-related matters. While matters relating to Cuba are of great importance, this narrowly-defined position makes clear to the Puerto Rican community that you value one interest to the exclusion of all other concerns of your constituents.

I urge you not to turn your back on Ambassador Aponte, who is eminently qualified to represent the United States and has been doing so ably since her recess appointment. You have a great opportunity to play an

active role in making her nomination permanent rather than playing politics with her career. I hope for your sake and for the sake of Latinos and Puerto Ricans everywhere that you make the fair and just choice. Do not vote against this able Puerto Rican.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Luis V. Gutierrez". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Luis V. Gutierrez
Member of Congress